

passed a resolution in 1952—and will welcome the many visitors to our Nation's Capital who come to pray for you.

As always, I commend Wanda K. Wigley for making the Mississippi National Day of Prayer a priority in our State. God bless America, guard us and guide us, and give our Nation peace.

IN HONOR OF SAM GIBBONS

SPEECH OF

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 30, 1996

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to our distinguished colleague, Mr. GIBBONS. The unwavering determination and fighting spirit of this war hero and political hero will be sorely missed when he leaves this body.

Appointed to the chairmanship of the Ways and Means Committee in the 103d Congress, his tenure was much too brief. Congressman GIBBONS currently serves as the ranking Democratic Member.

First elected to Congress in 1962, which makes him a Member of this House for more than three decades, Mr. GIBBONS is never far from the action—in fact, we usually can find him right in the middle of it. This Congress he has been a noted and passionate defender of Medicare and Medicaid, school lunches and a welfare system that creates long-term solutions to the cycle of poverty.

The Member from Tampa has a long history of shepherding domestic programs through the House. In the 1960's, President Johnson entrusted SAM to manage on the floor much of his Great Society Program, which included the very successful Head Start and Job Corps Programs.

Congressman GIBBONS has served his country for all of his adult life, beginning with his valiant service in World War II, when he parachuted into France the night before the Normandy invasion and received a Bronze Star for his heroic efforts.

Congressman GIBBONS's contributions to this House are legion. We will miss particularly his spirit, his tenacity, his humor, and his commitment to improving our country. I join with all of my colleagues in wishing our friend well as he moves on to his next challenge.

INJURED FEDERAL WORKERS

HON. BRIAN P. BILBRAY

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 1996

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I have recently introduced three bills, along with my colleague from Washington, Representative JENNIFER DUNN. These bills, H.R. 3203, H.R. 3204, and H.R. 3205, would, if enacted, make only minor changes to our labor law, yet will provide major changes in the quality of the lives of many who serve this Nation as employees of the Federal Government. These bills not only continue this Congress' effort to force the Federal Government to conform to the laws that apply to all other citizens in this great country, but also bring additional accountability to one

of our Government's largest Federal bureaucracies, the Department of Labor.

Mr. Speaker, of all the worker's compensation programs nationwide, only the Federal Government's does not allow for judicial review of cases to insure fair and equitable access and redress. Although proposals have been introduced in the past to address this question, the opportunity for success in this endeavor has never been greater. The culture of Congress has changed, and with this change, there is a newfound persistence in finding innovative solutions to vexing problems which previously were more easily buried or ignored.

H.R. 3205 not only provides a more equitable review process, but also provides reasonable time limitations in their deliberation. This bill expedites the initial decision process, eliminates the practice of redundant second opinions without legitimate legal or medical provocation, and provides the opportunity for claimants to have their own physician or representative present during the examinations. These provisions will significantly reduce the size of the quiet second opinions cottage industry that has developed in the wake of cases lasting up to 10 years, ruining the lives of the injured employees, and costing the Federal Government hundreds of millions of dollars.

Additionally, H.R. 3205 requires the Secretary of Labor to fix physician fees at a level comparable to the limits placed on fees charged by the claimants' own physicians. By equalizing compensation levels and structures, Federal workers can be assured that they are getting a fair hearing with honorable medical representation.

Finally, H.R. 3205 requires the Secretary of Labor to provide reemployment and vocational skill training to injured workers to quickly return the injured employee to the workplace. Federal employees are valuable assets to the Federal Government, with millions of dollars spent every year in training. It makes little sense to waste the capabilities of these workers developed over years of experiences in the Federal workplace by forcing them to sit on the sideline, and in many cases, extract millions more from the Federal Government through disability and other compensation.

H.R. 3203 and H.R. 3204 are bills with similar purposes, to streamline and expedite the workers' compensation policies of the Federal Government to provide fair and equitable access for all workers. Specifically, H.R. 3203 would require that in cases requiring a second opinion, that physician will be selected on an impartial basis. H.R. 3204 would require that physicians selected to provide medical opinions be board certified in the medical specialty which is being called into question. Mr. Speaker, you would be surprised to learn that despite repeated attempts by my office to have the agency in question voluntarily modify this practice, my constituents continue to be diagnosed by physicians with no certification to diagnose injuries of the nature in dispute.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, these bills are commonsense solutions to very specific problems. They are not legitimately controversial, and will truly make a legitimate difference in the lives of the hard-working Federal employees who provide valuable and necessary Government services. Besides the relatively mundane Federal workers that staff our bureaucracies, these unsung heroes also include the

valiant members of Border Patrol agents, Federal Firefighters, U.S. Marshals, Drug Enforcement Agents, and the Secret Service who put their lives and bodies in harm's way every day.

Representative DUNN and I are committed to expediting the journey of these bills to the floor of the House of Representatives, and I urge the committee of jurisdiction to examine these issues in the context of this year's hearings, and move forward as quickly as possible.

HOOSIER BUSINESS GROWTH

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 1, 1996

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I would like to insert my Washington Report for Wednesday, April 24, 1996, into the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD:

HOOSIER BUSINESS GROWTH

When politicians and the media talk about the economy, they tend to focus on the big, negative stories. Everyone has heard about how major corporations like IBM and AT&T are laying off workers in an attempt to downsize and become more competitive. Hoosiers have not been immune to such news. Recently Colgate in Clarksville and Randall Textron in Switzerland County, among others, have announced layoff plans. News like that causes all workers to feel anxious about their job security and the future. Hoosiers, however, should take some comfort that the Indiana economy has improved and is generating thousands of new jobs.

CURRENT ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

In recent years the unemployment rate in Indiana has been consistently lower than the national average, and the earnings of Hoosier workers have grown faster than in the rest of the country. At the end of 1995, the unemployment rate in the state was 4.6%, compared to 5.6% nationally. Economists tell us that the Indiana economy is operating at near full capacity, inflation is in check, and interest rates are low. In 1995, more than 50,000 net jobs were created in Indiana, and Hoosiers' real earnings grew by 3.4%, well ahead of the national average of 2.1%. Leading the way in job and earnings growth was the manufacturing sector, with a 7% increase in employment and a 6.6% increase in earnings.

The performance of the economy in the 96th District mirrors that of the state as a whole. The manufacturing sector is the single largest employer in our part of the state, and other important sectors are retail trade, services, construction, and agriculture. The I-65 corridor from Columbus to the Ohio River is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. Small businesses, in particular, are playing a major role in the expansion and diversification of southern Indiana's economy. Indeed, small businesses are the backbone of the U.S. economy as a whole, responsible for generating the majority of all new jobs. There are almost 6 million small businesses in the U.S. today, employing more than 92 million workers. In Indiana alone, 129,000 small businesses employ more than 2.1 million Hoosiers.

EXPANDING BUSINESSES

Helping the economy of the 9th District has been one of my priorities, and I want to share with you a few of the stories I have heard recently about companies that are doing well, expanding, and creating jobs in the region.